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DEBBIE STABENOW
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U.S. Senate to Begin Historic Debate on Prescription Drug Coverage

WASHINGTON—U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) today announced the beginning of two weeks of debate on proposals to provide a comprehensive Medicare prescription drug benefit and lower rising prescription prices. As coordinator of the Senate Prescription Drug Task Force, Senator Stabenow has been leading efforts to provide the American people with much-needed relief from the soaring cost of medications.

“Too many Americans are facing a horrible choice: Do they buy food, pay their utility bills or get their medicine? No one should have to make that decision,” said Senator Stabenow. “That’s why, as the coordinator of the Senate Prescription Drug Task Force, I am working hard on a multi-tiered approach that will help get skyrocketing drug prices under control.”

The first piece of prescription drug legislation to come to the Senate floor this week will be the Greater Access to Affordable Pharmaceuticals Act (S.812) sponsored by Senator Chuck Schumer (D-NY) and cosponsored by Senator Stabenow and others. This bipartisan legislation will close the loopholes in the approval process for generic drugs and allow them to come to the market in a timely manner and dramatically reduce prices for consumers.

“American consumers will save billions each year if they are given access to generic equivalents of the most commonly-used prescription drugs” said Stabenow. “However, as we have seen in the past, pharmaceutical companies often use backdoor methods to prevent their brand-name medications from coming off patent. With prescription drug prices skyrocketing at a rate of 17 percent each year, many of these drugs are unaffordable—and therefore unavailable—to many Americans. We cannot allow the pharmaceutical corporations to continue to put these medications out of the reach of those who need them most.”

In addition to legislation that will give Americans greater access to lower-priced generic medications, Senator Stabenow is working hard to provide for a comprehensive prescription drug benefit under Medicare. She has also put forth a number of price-reducing proposals that include the following:

- The MEDS II Act: Legislation to permit prescription drug reimportation and allow Americans to take advantage of international price competition
- The FAIR Act: Legislation to limit taxpayer subsidies for pharmaceutical company advertising to a level no higher than those provided for research and development
- The Rx Flexibility for States Act: Legislation to clarify current laws that may prevent states from providing lower-priced prescription drugs to all their citizens